



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON DC 20420**

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-01-04

**Position Classification Guidance for Application of Position Classification
Standard for Administrative Work in the Human Resources Management Group,
GS-200.**

1. **Purpose.** This Human Resources Management Letter (HRML) provides guidance on classifying Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Human Resources Specialist positions.

2. **Background.**

a. The human resource (HR) management field has undergone significant changes in the past decade as a result of downsizing the HR workforce, greater generalization of knowledge and skills, and increased systems consultation to meet organizational mission and goals. Changes within VA's HR management program have mirrored these larger trends. For example, standardized HR organizational structures are next to impossible to find as a result of increased consolidation of functions, greater delegations of authority, and expanded automation of routine activity.

b. Meeting the challenges of these changes has been done within significant resource constraints in the Department. In the past 6 years, attrition in such fields as position classification and staffing (56 percent) have exceeded that of the rest of the Government and was also disproportionate to the reductions in other Departmental occupations.

c. To address the dynamics of the changes in the HR management field, a new classification standard on HR specialist work was released by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in December 2000. This new standard covers all the administrative positions in the GS-200 job family formerly classified under seven different series. Due to the changing work environment, the standard could have potential impact on the classification of new and existing HR positions in the Department.

3. **Procedures.**

a. To ensure consistency in the evaluation and classification process, the attached interpretation and guidance may be used for applying this classification standard. This

guidance is **not** to be used in lieu of the OPM Job Family Position Classification Standard for Administrative Work in the Human Resources Management Group, but rather as a supplement to that standard.

b. The new standard covers positions formerly classified under Part II, Nonsupervisory Personnel Positions, of the GS-201 standard dated June 1976, and the following personnel specialties formerly covered under separate series:

Position Classification Series, GS-221
Occupational Analysis Series, GS-222
Salary and Wage Administration Series, GS-223
Employee Relations Series, GS-230
Labor Relations Series, GS-233
Employee Development Series, GS-235

c. The new title for personnel specialist is Human Resources Specialist. This title is to be used for positions that include two or more specialized HR functions in which none predominate or when there is no established specialty. Positions with specialties will be classified using parenthetical titles in accordance with instructions in the standard. The HR classification staff should review each position description and verify the appropriateness of the assigned position title.

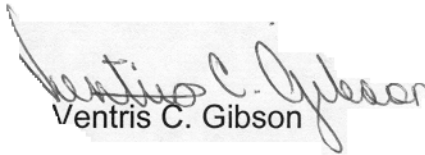
d. Personnel Officer positions that were previously classified by use of Part I, Personnel Officer Positions, of the GS-201 standard dated June 1976, will now be evaluated by use of the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG). Supervisory positions will likewise be evaluated by use of the GSSG. Leader positions will be evaluated by use of the General Schedule Leader Guide.

e. We recommend that position descriptions for positions covered by this standard be rewritten in the Factor Evaluation System format of this standard, in order to achieve position description adequacy and evaluation accuracy.

f. The attachments provide guidance on the application of Factor 1, Knowledge Required by the Position, and Factor 5, Scope and Effect, in evaluating positions being considered for the GS-12 grade level. The position description and position report provided in Attachments B and C are generic and should not be used verbatim. They are being provided to serve as a guide to illustrate Attachment A and will need to be modified and tailored to suit specific situations.

g. Stations may wish to provide the Shared Service Center with position descriptions written under this new standard so they may be included in the Position Description Library.

4. **Questions.** Questions concerning this policy may be referred to Jim Halliday, Classification and Compensation Service, at (202) 273-4973.



Ventris C. Gibson

Attachments

Attachment A

Position Classification Guidance

General

Journeyman-level VA Human Resources Specialist positions that perform operational functions are properly classified at either the grade 11 or grade 12 level. Positions supporting classification at the GS-12 level will usually be based upon the crediting of Level 5-4 for the scope and effect and/or Level 1-8 for the knowledge required by the position.

Crediting of Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position

The level of knowledge required of a Human Resources Specialist providing a range of HR services to a local facility would normally be credited with Level 1-7. There are HR Specialist positions that may warrant crediting Level 1-8 as illustrated in the following three examples. Other situations exist.

A. Mastery of advanced Human Resources Management (HRM) knowledge and seasoned consultative skill sufficient to resolve HRM problems not susceptible to treatment by standard methods. (Such positions require incumbents provide expert advisory and consulting service and/or authoritative policy interpretations to management, typically in more than a single facility.)

B. Assignments requiring the regular and recurring oversight of a team effort engaged in special studies and projects.

C. Positions with team/functional leader responsibilities at the facility level as this level of knowledge is associated with significantly increased scope of impact that the incumbent's findings and recommendations have on the substantive administration of key programs.

Crediting of Factor 5 – Scope and Effect

When crediting for Factor 5, Scope and Effect, remember to only consider the effect of properly performed work. Scope and effect at Level 5-3 generally involves providing HR services for a local facility. At Level 5-4, the scope and effect of the work consists of providing operating level HR services to major segments or portions of the agency. One example of Level 5-4 scope and effect would be providing HR services to a consolidated VISN/SDN HRM office. Another example of Level 5-4 would be providing advisory and consulting HR services to a very large integrated medical center or health care facility. The effect of work at Level 5-3 generally impacts a small local facility. At Level 5-4, the work products or services affect a wider range of agency activities such as providing HRM services to a consolidated VISN/SDN office or a large consolidated medical center or health care facility.

Human Resources Specialist, GS-201-12

Introduction

The specialist provides classification, recruitment and placement, and compensation services and advice in an operating human resources management office serving a consolidated VISN with diverse medical, scientific, and administrative functions carried out across the entire VISN.

Major Duties

Provides a full-range of recruitment, staffing, and placement functions to include multiple types of excepted and competitive appointments, in-service placement, and reduction-in-force activities. Provides advice and assistance to management on individual and broad recruitment and placement plans, including advising on the structure and content of vacancy announcements, the need for paid advertising, use of upward-mobility approaches, and various methods of recruitment and placement options. Considers the labor market, employment trends, changing missions, morale, and technological influences in providing advice to management. Assists management in establishing and realizing new initiatives and objectives such as those concerning diversity goals, special emphasis programs, and student employment. Guides the development and implementation of approaches such as computerized job application and ranking methods.

Ensures that pay, entitlements, and work schedules are set in accordance with laws and regulations. Develops guidelines and procedures to implement changes in programs in assigned areas. Provides consultation to management, especially on those matters with significant ramifications that are controversial or particularly sensitive.

Provides advice and makes determinations concerning complex position classification problems, including those which are unprecedented and/or controversial. Suggests approaches to resolve position management issues. Interprets and explains new and modified HR laws, rules, and regulations.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Extensive knowledge of Federal Government employment laws, requirements, and procedures, including knowledge of both Title 5 and Title 38 systems and their relationship to multiple HR specialties to serve as an expert advisor to senior managers and supervisors regarding recruitment and placement strategies, to resolve issues, and to avoid problems.

Knowledge of pay administration and compensation principles and practices, overtime and back pay laws and regulations, limitations and computation methods for both Title 38 and Title 5 pay systems.

Substantive knowledge of the agency's structure, programs, issues, and occupations.

Thorough knowledge of position classification and job grading concepts and systems to provide alternatives and recommendations to management concerning such matters as the structure of organizations and individual positions, and the resolution of controversial and sensitive issues.

Requires thorough knowledge of both Title 5 and Title 38 laws, rules, and regulations. Skill in communicating orally and in writing to clarify and justify issues to management, employees, and other concerned parties.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

The objectives, methods of accomplishment, and deadlines for assignment are developed in collaboration with the supervisor. The supervisor accepts the employee's findings and recommendations as authoritative and the supervisor and management normally act on them. The supervisor reviews completed work for feasibility, overall effectiveness, and policy compliance.

Factor 3. Guidelines

Laws, precedents, regulations, policies, and case laws guide the employee. Guidelines are often broad, requiring deviations from accepted practices and traditional approaches and use of judgment.

Factor 4. Complexity

Diversity of problems and a variety of occupations complicate the work in an organization undergoing:

- Rapid technological advances;
- Major changes in missions, priorities, and structure; and
- Critical shortages in various hard-to-recruit occupations.

The employee must deal with issues such as the quality of job applicants, impact of stakeholder involvement in automated classification determinations, cost-effectiveness of contracting for services, and the provision of various consultative HR services to management.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect

The position provides sound advice and decisions for all levels of management in the VISN. Work requires the employee to analyze and evaluate alternative approaches to recruitment, position classification, pay administration, and placement. Suggestions often lead to organizational improvements or enhanced human resources management programs in the VISN. Such improvements are occasionally adapted by other organizations.

Factors 6 and 7. Personal Contacts and Their Purpose

Contacts are with various VISN and station management officials, employees, medical personnel, applicants, other government agency employees, and representatives from unions.

Contacts are primarily to identify and solve significant problems. Skill is required to analyze and explain options and decisions and employee must often persuade conflicting parties to accept proposed solutions and recommendations.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

Work is primarily sedentary.

Factor 9. Work Environment

Work is carried out primarily in an office setting. The employee may be required to travel to other VISN locations.

Position Report – Prototype HR Specialist Position

Factor 1. Knowledge Required – Factor Level 1-7 for 1250 points.

The position requires a comprehensive knowledge of principles, policies and practices in HR functional specialties, together with analytical skills, to serve as an advisor for the VISN in the areas of classification, recruitment and placement, and pay administration. The employee provides advice and solves human resources problems including those that are controversial and sensitive, as well as those that go beyond traditional approaches and involve other HR specialties.

Factor Level 1-6 is exceeded as the subject position entails knowledge above that needed to solve procedural problems. The employee in the subject position tackles controversial issues, interpreting and applying new laws, regulations, decisions, and criteria and recommends courses of action which may depart from the status quo.

Factor Level 1-8 is not met as the position does not serve as an advisor to top agency management or policy makers. Further, the role of the position is not to serve as a “change agent” by leading change initiatives, guiding teams engaged in special studies, or participating in establishing strategic goals.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls – Factor Level 2-4 for 450 points.

The employee is assigned ongoing responsibilities and collaborates with the supervisor in defining scope, specific objectives, and deadlines. Typically, the employee’s decisions and recommendations are accepted by the supervisor and senior management. This matches factor level description 2-4 as described on page 24 of the standard.

Factor 3. Guidelines – Factor Level 3-4 for 450 points.

The employee refers to a myriad of specific and broad guidelines, including laws, case laws, precedents, Federal and agency regulations, and policies. The employee is required to interpret many of the guides and to develop procedures and instructions. The employee initiates improved approaches to treat specific issues or problems. This matches factor level description 3-4 as described on page 26 of the standard.

Factor 4. Complexity – Factor Level 4-4 for 225 points.

The employee collaborates with senior management to provide authoritative advice on significant issues and problems. The employee makes recommendations related to controversial topics including the structure of organizational units, span of control, and the interpretation and implementation of sensitive pay laws and regulations. Creativity

and persuasion are applied in deviating from precedent and standard practices, and in convincing senior management and employee groups to accept recommendations and suggestions. This matches factor level description 4-4 as described on page 66 of the standard.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect – Factor Level 5-4 for 225 points.

Scope of work – Administers an HR program for a VISN that resolves or advises on complex problems and issues.

Effect of work – Work products or services affect a wide range of agency activities in the VISN.

The scope and effect match factor level description 5-4 as described on page 35 of the standard.

Factors 6 & 7. Personal Contacts and Their Purpose – Factor Level 2-C for 145 points.

Contacts are primarily with senior program officials of the VISN, as well as with selecting officials, HRM employees, attorneys, employees, applicants, union officials, and the public.

The purpose of these contacts is to clarify complex requirements, influence and persuade managers and others to accept findings and act on recommendations despite resistance and competing objectives.

The personal contacts and their purpose match factor level description 2-C as described on page 38 of the standard.

Factor 8. Physical Demands – Level 8-1 for 5 points.

Factor 9. Work Environment – Level 9-1 for 5 points.

TOTAL POINTS CREDITED 2755 = Grade 12

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Attachment D

Typical GS-201 Evaluations

Servicing local HRM operation			More than local (VISN/SDN)		
Factor 1.	1-7	1250 points	1-7	1250 points	
Factor 2.	2-4	450 points	2-4	450 points	
Factor 3.	3-4	450 points	3-4	450 points	
Factor 4.	4-4	225 points	4-4	225 points	
Factor 5.	5-3	150 points	5-4	225 points	
Factors 6/7.	2-C	145 points	2-C	145 points	
Factor 8.	8-1	5 points	8-1	5 points	
Factor 9.	9-1	5 points	9-1	5 points	
TOTAL		2680 points	GS-11	2755 points	GS-12

Senior/functional leader			HR consultant		
Factor 1.	1-8	1550 points	1-8	1550 points	
Factor 2.	2-4	450 points	2-4	450 points	
Factor 3.	3-4	450 points	3-4	450 points	
Factor 4.	4-4	225 points	4-4	225 points	
Factor 5.	5-3	150 points	5-3	150 points	
Factor 6/7	2-c	145 points	2-c	145 points	
Factor 8.	8-1	5 points	8-1	5 points	
Factor 9.	9-1	5 points	9-1	5 points	
TOTAL	2980	GS-12	2980	GS-12	

GS-11 (2355-2750)

GS-12 (2755-3150)